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PROPOSALS

FOR

ESTABLISHING A SALT COMPANY

AT

KEY WEST;

ACCOMPANIED

WITH CERTIFICATES AND DOCUMENTS

FROM

PERSONS OF GREAT RESPECTABILITY;

ELUCIDATING

The great advantages to be derived by Manufacturing Salt by Solar
Evaporation, at that Island, &c. &c.

Wm

Freeman

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY EDWARD DE KRAFFT.

1830.

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PROPOSALS

For establishing the LA FAYETTE SALT COMPANY at Key West, with a capital of 75,000 dollars, which has been chartered by the Legislative Council of Florida, and sanctioned by the Congress of the United States.

WE, the subscribers, engage to take and pay for the number of shares of \$ 100 each, affixed to our names respectively, in a company to be formed by subscription for the purpose of occupying and working one-fourth part of the Salt pond at Key West, which pond is more particularly described in a drawing herewith annexed. And we do hereby agree to form a company, to be styled the "La Fayette Salt Company of Key West;" and as soon as the above named sum of seventy-five thousand dollars shall have been subscribed for, a meeting of the stockholders shall be called, for the purpose of choosing five directors to conduct the affairs of the company, until the 1st Monday in January, 1831. And we hereby further agree, that so soon as the subscription for the above sum of \$ 75,000 shall be filled up, and \$ 30,000 paid into the hands of the directors or trustees, as the case may be, and a satisfactory cession of the property made to the company, the same shall go into operation.

It is moreover agreed that the profits arising from the operations of the company (after deducting as a yearly dividend, 15 per cent. for the use of the stockholders) shall, from time to time, be invested in stock until the works are put in complete operation, which is not to exceed the sum of \$ 75,000.

It is furthermore agreed and understood, that the proprietors of the said pond is to retain twenty-five bushels of salt out of every hundred bushels made, as a compensation for the relinquishment of the property to the company.

A rough estimate for the government of those who may feel disposed to embark in the La Fayette Salt Company.

200 hands, men, women, boys and girls, of 12 years of age, and upwards, it is believed will be sufficient to put one-fourth of the pond into full operation, which would probably cost \$ 250 each	50,000
Transportation, provisions, insurance, &c.	3,000
Lumber for building houses, &c.	3,000
Pumps, tools, &c.	1,000
	<hr/>
	\$ 57,000
	<hr/>

*Refer to the La Fayette company and
complete for proposals*

From the best information that has been obtained from the Bahama Islands, and other places where Salt is made by natural evaporation, it will be seen that a hand will make from 1500 to 3500 bushels per annum, which, at 25 cents per bushel, <i>taking the least average to be 2000 bushels</i> , which would amount to 500 dollars for each hand, and for the whole					-	-	-	100,000
From which must be deducted for the use of the proprietors, say 25 per cent.								25,000
Feeding and clothing the hands at \$50 a head					-	-	-	10,000
Agent, overseer, &c.					-	-	-	2,500
Incidental expenses					-	-	-	3,000
								40,500
								\$ 59,500

An act to incorporate the La Fayette Salt Company of Key West.

Be it enacted by the Governor and Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, That, from and after the passage of this act, all those persons who have already associated themselves, or may hereafter join a company or limited partnership, under the name and title of the La Fayette Salt Company of Key West, and their successors, shall be, and they are hereby incorporated and made a body corporate and politic, by the name and style of the La Fayette Salt Company of Key West, and as such shall continue until the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and fifty. And by that name may sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, in courts of record, and any other place whatsoever, and by that name may have and hold, purchase, receive, possess, enjoy and retain, lands, rents, tenements, hereditaments, goods, chattles, and effects of what nature, kind, or quality, soever, necessary for the object of this incorporation, and the same may sell, grant, demise, alien and dispose of, and by that name shall have, during the continuance of this act, succession and may make, have and use, a common seal, and the same may break, alter and renew, at pleasure, and shall have power to ordain, establish and put in execution, such by-laws, ordinances and regulations, as shall seem necessary and convenient for the government of said corporation, not being contrary to law, nor the constitution there-

of, and, generally, to do and execute all acts, necessary or proper, for the objects of said incorporation, subject to the rules, regulations, restrictions, limitations and provisions, herein directed and declared.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted*, That the capital stock of the said company shall consist of not exceeding seventy-five thousand dollars, money of the United States, to be divided into shares of one hundred dollars each.

SEC. 3. *Be it further enacted*, That the affairs of the said company shall be conducted by five directors who shall choose from their body a president. Two of the directors with the president shall form a board, or quorum, for transacting all the business of the company. In case of the sickness of the president, or his necessary absence, his place may be supplied by any director whom he, by writing under his hand, may nominate for that purpose, or in case of his not making such a nomination, the board may appoint a president to act during his sickness or absence. The president and directors, who may be in office at the time of the passage of this act, or shall subsequently be appointed by the stockholders, shall continue in office under and by virtue of this act of incorporation, until others shall be duly chosen in their stead; and no person shall be a director, or president, who is not a stockholder, and a director ceasing to be a stockholder shall cease to be a director. Every stockholder shall be entitled to vote by himself, his agent, or proxy, appointed under his hand and seal, at all elections in virtue of this act, and shall have as many votes as he shall have shares.

SEC. 4. *Be it further enacted*, That a general meeting of the stockholders of the said company shall be holden on the first Monday of January, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-one, and on the first Monday of January in every year thereafter, at such place, as the president and directors may appoint, by giving two months' notice in the newspaper published at Key West, for the purpose of electing directors for the ensuing year; who shall meet speedily after their election, and choose a president and directors, for the time being, shall continue in office until others shall be duly elected in their places, and be organized by the assembling of a quorum and the choice of a president. At all elections the persons, having the greatest number of votes, shall be deemed to be chosen. All elections shall be held under the superintendence of the president of the company, for the time being, and five stockholders, not being at the time directors appointed by the board of directors, any four of whom shall be the judges thereof, and

who shall immediately thereafter notify the persons elected, and make a return thereof to the directors, at their first meeting; should two, or more persons, have the same number of votes, the other individuals elected directors shall determine by ballot from among said persons, who shall be the director or directors. All elections shall be opened at ten o'clock in the forenoon, and close at three in the afternoon.

SEC. 5. *Be it further enacted*, That the president and directors shall have full power to make, revise, alter and annul, all such rules, orders, by-laws and regulations, for the government of the said corporation, and that of its officers, servants and affairs, as they shall, from time to time, think expedient, and to use, employ, and dispose of, the funds and property of the said company for the interest and benefit of the stockholders, and agreeably to the objects of the said incorporation.

SEC. 6. *Be it further enacted*, That the books, correspondence and papers, of the company, shall at all times be subject to the inspection of the directors.

SEC. 7. *Be it further enacted*, That the president and directors shall have power to appoint all officers, or servants requisite, for executing the business of the said company, and to establish the compensation to be made to the president and to the other officers, or servants, of the said company, respectively; but no compensation shall be given to a director for his services, except by a vote of the stockholders in a general meeting.

SEC. 8. *Be it further enacted*, That the president and directors shall have power to call a general meeting of the stockholders, for the purposes concerning the interest of the company, giving at least two months' notice in the newspaper published at Key West.

SEC. 9. *Be it further enacted*, That the shares of the capital stock, at any time owned by any individual stockholder, shall be transferable only on the books of the company according to such rules as may, conformably to law, be established in that behalf by the president and directors, but all debts actually due to the company, by a stockholder requesting a transfer, must be satisfied before such transfer shall be made.

SEC. 10. *Be it further enacted*. That the dividends of the profits of the company, or so much of said profits, as shall be deemed expedient and proper, shall be declared half yearly in the second week in January and July in each year; the amount of said dividend to be, from time to time, determined by the president and directors, and, in no case, to exceed the amount

of the neat profits, actually acquired by the company, so that the capital stock of said company shall never be impaired by dividends.

SEC. 11. *Be it further enacted*, That if the said directors shall, at any time, willfully and knowingly make, or declare, any dividend which shall impair the said capital stock, all the directors present, at the making, or declaring of said dividend, and consenting thereto, shall be liable in their individual capacities to the company for the amount, or proportion, of said capital stock so divided by the said directors: And each director, who shall be present at the making, or declaring of such dividend, shall be deemed to have consented thereto, unless he shall, immediately enter into writing his dissent on the minutes of the proceedings of the board.

SEC. 12. *Be it further enacted*, That if any vacancy shall at any time happen among the directors by death, resignation, or otherwise, the rest of the directors, for the time being, shall elect a director to fill the vacancy.

SEC. 13. *Be it further enacted*, That in case it should, at any time happen, that an election of directors should not be made on any day, when pursuant to this act, it ought to have been made, the said corporation shall not, for that cause, be deemed to be dissolved, but it shall be lawful, on any other day, to hold and make an election of directors at a meeting to be called in such manner as shall be prescribed by the laws and ordinances of said corporation.

Passed 6th November, 1829.

A. BELLAMY, President of the Legislative Council.
THOS. MUNROE, Clerk.

Approved 12th November, 1829.

WILLIAM P. DUVAL, Governor of the Territory of Florida.

An exposition of the advantages to be derived from making Salt, by solar evaporation, at Key West.

[From the Key West Register, of the 5th March, 1829.]

The following communication is from a highly respectable gentleman, who spent several months last winter among the Bahama Islands, where the manufacture of Salt by natural evaporation, has been carried on to a great extent for the last fifty years, with a view of obtaining the best information in regard to the most approved method of making the article. When the many local advantages that the Salt Pond of Key West possesses are taken into consideration, particularly as it regards

climate, the protecting duties, and a certainty of finding a home market for the article, greater advantages are presented to the capitalist in the making of Salt here, than in any other business known.

“The general principles for the production of Salt by solar evaporation, which must be applicable every where, are too simple and well known to render it necessary to advert to them, in an attempt to impart to others the little information the writer possesses on the subject.

“The great object in that business seems to be to keep the water so that it must gradually strengthen, until it reaches a certain degree of saturation, when it should be spread out in pans or vats, where it quickly deposits its Salt, and from which it is immediately raked and secured.

“The Salt Ponds on the Bahamas, are produced by springs, and enlarged by the admission of water from the sea, through flood gates. A considerable portion of them is reserved to form a reservoir in which the water deposits its impurities, and becomes strengthened in a degree fit to deposit its Salt, when it is passed into pans, in which the Salt is immediately precipitated, and from which it may be immediately raked. In places where the sun’s rays are not powerful, the water is passed through several reservoirs before it is admitted into the pans from which the Salt is to be raked, the object of which is not only to free the water from the lime it contains, but to hasten its acquisition of a certain strength, before it be admitted into what are termed the raking pans.

“Should the lime be deposited in the same pans in which the Salt forms, the Salt will be found to be very impure. On the Bahamas the general practice is to allow that deposit in the *only* reservoir they have, from which the raking pans are directly supplied. Yet there is no doubt that if a sale could be made of all the Salt these Ponds are capable of producing, they would largely increase the quantity by the process thus stated, to be pursued in places where the sun has less power.

“The Ponds are divided into pans of irregular dimensions, to accord with the level of the bottom, so that some are much less than 100 feet square, many are of that size, and others vary from one to five acres. Those pans are formed by making walls of rough stones, a foot high, between which embankments or walks of various widths are formed, with the earth or mud taken from the bottom of the pans, after the formation of the walls; or if the supply of earth thence be found insufficient for that purpose, any earth or material that will not absorb the water, may be used. Their formation is very sim-

ple, in which *labor alone* is required, as the stone is very convenient around the Ponds.

“ They require no sheds to protect them from the rains, as they may be so constructed as to admit the drain of rain water from them through a small gate communicating with a canal or ditch, passing through the embankments outside of the pans, which will pass it out of the way.

“ They are so constructed as to admit the passage of the prevailing winds over their length, as wind hastens evaporation and according to the depth of the water, aids in forming large Salt. So, in shallower pans, smaller Salt is produced.

“ In the Bahamas, the Salt Ponds are reserved by the Colonial Government, who proportion to families, their subjects, shares or portions of the Ponds, in proportion to the number of working hands they contain; their improvements to which are transferable as other property, they paying into the Colonial Treasury the amount of money collected on the tonnage on all foreign vessels in which they export Salt.

“ At Rum Key, one acre, or four shares, affords from twelve to fifteen hundred bushels of Salt in one raking, of which they have never less than four in a year, and in very favorable seasons, they have from eight to twelve.

“ A Salt season includes the whole year, from which the periodical rainy months of the spring and fall should be deducted. The labor of eight hands, during four days, is required to take out the Salt from one acre; immediately after which, other rakings may be made every fifteen days, during the continuance of dry weather.

“ The Salt is stacked and covered with Palmetto leaves; the sun and wind soon dries it, and renders it so hard as to be impervious to the heaviest rains. The writer's informant had on Rum Key, 1000 feet in length by 400 in depth, in pans in which he only employed 25 hands.

“ The attention of the proprietors is divided between agriculture and Salt making. By far the greater proportion of their time is directed to the former; and after the pans are formed, little more is required than to secure the Salt which the season may produce; and that quantity is generally found to exceed the demand for exportation.

“ The Turk's Islands possess advantages for Salt-making superior to any other of the Bahama Islands, owing to the great dryness of its atmosphere, and the seldom occurrence of rain. Although their attention is not there, as at the other islands, divided between Salt-making and agriculture, yet the

demand for Salt being so far short of the quantity raked, no experiment has been made to ascertain what quantity a specific number of hands could make from a pond, in pans of any specific dimensions. Their pans are formed of the same materials as at Rum Key, and are of similar dimensions; but the water possesses greater strength, and their bottoms are said to be of a quality not appertaining to any other pond, that rapidly quickens crystallization.

“In a good Salt season, one hand works five shares, and secures 700 bushels to each, or 3,500 bushels to all.

“They have pans of great dimensions near the reservoirs, (as the larger the pans are, the better will be the quality of the Salt) which are filled with water to the depth of 18 or 20 inches, which furnish from 4 to 5000 bushels of very large grained Salt, twice a year. The only utensils used in the business, are large hoes, shovels, pick axes, hand and wheelbarrows.

“Ragged, Long, and Rose Islands, Exuma, and some others of the Bahamas, furnish Salt, where the climate, process of Salt-making, and the product, is about the same as at Rum Key.

“In Massachusetts, extensive Salt works have been established within a few years, which are progressing to a great extent, and which, with their short summer season, and the disadvantage of having to form all their works of lumber, are found profitable.

“At Salina, in the State of New York, the works which are owned by that State are found to be very lucrative to the lessees, who are required to pay a duty or toll to the State, of twelve and a half cents on each bushel by them made; which duty alone in the course of the year, amounts to the large sum of \$150,000.

“For the information of those who, from facts, would like to form their own opinion of the possibility of Salt being produced from the Pond on this Island, the following memorandum of the latitude of some of the Bahama Salt Islands is given:

Grand Turk's Island	is in lat. 21 deg. 30 min.	
Rum Key	“	23 34
Long Island	“	23 30
Exuma	“	22 26
Rose Island	“	25 15
And Key West is in latitude,	24	25

“Its climate is the same as that of the Bahamas; the quality of its Salt Pond is the same; its extent (about 342 acres) is much greater than the Pond on any other Island, excepting that on Rum Key.

“The stone for the formation of walls is here abundant, and more convenient than is the case at any other known place.

“The facility for loading vessels is very great, as the locality of the Pond is such that boats can enter it, receive the Salt, and carry it directly to them in the harbor, which is already well known to be unusually safe, and in which vessels of the largest class can enter with great ease.

“When we take into consideration the existing protecting duty on Salt made in this country, the immense quantity of that article that the Pond on this Island is capable of furnishing—the geographical advantages of our port, past which a number of our vessels annually return in ballast from ports in the Gulf of Mexico, Cuba, &c. we should not be thought visionary in predicting that the growth of our population and commercial importance must be certain, and unparalleled in its rapidity.

“The extent of the Pond will afford employment to a very large number of labourers in the formation of the pans; after the completion of which, except during the raking season, they might be otherwise employed. This fact should engage the attention of those who have embarked in Sugar planting in Middle Florida, whose hands, during the growth of their cane might be advantageously employed here.

“It will be well, perhaps, to add, that it is the general opinion that the profit to be derived from Salt-making will be found so great, that it will not be an object *here* to raise provisions, especially as they can be regularly supplied from New-Orleans, and on terms that will be found more advantageous to the adventurer in that business.

“KEY WEST, March 5. 1829.”

Extract of a letter from a highly respectable gentleman residing at Turk's Island, addressed to Jno. Whitehead, Esq, dated 2d May, 1829.

“I notice particularly what you say in regard to your Salt ponds at Key West. I am apprehensive that it will not suit me just now to break up my establishment here, owing to the immense sacrifice unavoidable in such a case. Circumstances may however enable me to do so in a year or two, (perhaps very soon) and my prepossession in favor of the climate of Florida would most likely lead me that way, particularly if any thing like encouragement be held out. In the mean time, I should not only have no objection, but would be really happy at affording you any and all the information in

my power, that may be likely to facilitate your views regarding the Salt ponds. I notice by a Key West Register of the 5th of March, (which lately fell into my hands,) that you have already been put in possession of some information on the subject: that part respecting the building of the pans is correct. You ask me to state the cost of a pan of one hundred square feet. This, as well as every thing else, you are aware, would altogether depend upon the comparative value of labor, &c. Here, for instance, such a pan would not, I think, cost more than \$50, and would yield 1,500 to 2,500 bushels at a raking. We do not calculate upon more than three rakings in a season, though five are sometimes got:—1,500 bushels is a fair average for each laborer: it does sometimes, however, amount to as much as 3,000*. The walls round your pans ought not to exceed sixteen inches in depth, the wind being full as necessary as the sun, and twelve inches of ripe pickle being a good filling for the pans—new pans should, however, have shallow fillings at first, so that the sun may act more powerfully upon the bottom, and thereby render it firm, which is indispensable. I shall be glad to hear from you further on the subject, for should I be induced to join you, I should, in all probability, bring several others with me.”

Information collected by Mr. J. P. Baldwin, of Nassau, in reply to certain Queries sent to him.

What size are the pans?

The shallow water pans, generally, are 60 by 30 feet.

What is the height of the walls?

Twelve inches.

What is the depth of water?

Eight inches pickle, and not water.

What is the labor required to form them?

Manual labor (men and women) average 37cents per diem.

Can they be so constructed as to allow the drain of rain water from them?

Yes, by having a separate drain constructed in the inside.

Can the rain water be drained from the reservoir as well as the pans?

No, it can only be drained from the pans, and will not mix with the salt water pickle under three days.

* The hands are not employed in making salt exclusively, a part of their time is taken up in making provision for their own support.

What portion of the pond should be reserved for the reservoir?

The central or deepest part.

Are pans used to receive the deposit of water, between the reservoir and those in which the Salt forms?

Yes, and then the water becomes a strong pickle.

How many rakings in a year, when the hands are applied to nothing but Salt raking, and what quantity is allowed to be a fair earning for one hand in a year?

At Turk's Island they commence raking in April and continue, if the season is good, until December. The greatest quantity of salt is raked in July and August, when the shallow pans will make in seventeen days from the time of filling. In a good Salt season is 700 bushels to a share, and one hand works five shares or 3,500 bushels. Thirty to forty bushels a day is the allowance for one hand to rake and carry out, which he does by a wheel-barrow, in which a half barrel is placed. The larger the pans the better the salt: attached to the reservoir are the deep water pans: these are very extensive, from 150 to 60 feet wide. They are filled from 18 to 20 inches. These pans make but twice a year. The Salt is immensely large.—The largest will form four to five thousand bushels at time, or 8 to 10,000 bushels a year. The walls are 24 inches in depth.

NEW YORK, August 25, 1830.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

“ I have inspected the Salt pond at Key West. It is my opinion that Salt making in that place can be made to be the most lucrative branch of business which is pursued in the United States. Notwithstanding the reduction of duty, I should myself engage in it if I was prepared. I examined about 1,000 bushels of salt laying on the shore, which was about the consistency of loom Liverpool, and equally white. The whole pond appeared to my taste nearly as Salt as the brine taken from a barrel of beef or pork packed in the usual way with a bushel of salt to a barrel.

A. FISK.”

KEY WEST, March 3, 1830.

TO WILLIAM FREAN, ESQ.

Sir: In reply to your note in relation to the Salt ponds of Key West, I would remark, that my estimate of the Salt formed by natural causation, in the summer and fall of 1828, was between fifteen and twenty thousand bushels. As to the com-

parative facilities of Salt making at this place, I can only say, that I have learned from experienced Salt-makers, that the ponds of this Island may be cultivated more advantageously than those of the Bahamas.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,
A. S. THRUSTON, *Collector.*

TERRITORY OF FLORIDA—County of Monroe, Town of Key West.

This is to certify, that in the summer of eighteen hundred and twenty-eight, we, in company of Col. P. C. Greene of this town, made a visit to the Salt pond of this Island, and discovered that a large quantity of Salt had been made in said pond by the natural process of evaporation. What quantity there was in the pond we are not able to judge, but presume there was between ten and twenty thousand bushels.

THE. OWENS,
LEMUEL OTIS.

Sworn to before me this first day of March, eighteen hundred and thirty.
W. FREAN, Notary Public.

KEY WEST, March 1, 1830.

I do hereby certify, that I have at several different times between the years 1825 and '30, observed considerable quantities of Salt in the large pond on Key West, made by natural evaporation: and it is my opinion that a large quantity of that article can be made by working the ponds upon the Bahama plan; and that I intend to embark in that business as soon as I can get a Salt-maker from the Bahamas to superintend the business.

R. FITZPATRICK.

KEY WEST, February 27, 1830.

Sir: Being called on to give my opinion respecting the Salt ponds on the Island of Key West, I must briefly state to you, that in the year 1822, I visited the Salt ponds by the invitation of Dr. Montgomery. I found Salt of a good quality and in abundance on the margin of those ponds, in places where the water was from three to six inches deep. The bottom was incrustated, with a fine transparent Salt. It was my opinion at that time that any quantity of Salt equal in quality to the best Turk's Island might be made at those ponds by proper cultivation, and at a trifling expense. My late residence on the Key

has afforded me opportunities of confirming my former opinion, having seen the Salt raked in abundance without any cultivation. The local situation of those ponds afford great advantages, being easy of access—free from woods and shades—open to the N. E., S. E. and N. W.—affording every facility to a solar evaporation, being based on a solid rock, a complete protection against the land crabs, the water not exceeding two feet in depth, and every material at hand for forming the most permanent Salt pans, viz: stone and marl in abundance.

I am sir, very respectfully, yours. &c.

EDE VAN EVOUR, *Civil Engineer.*

William Frean, Esq.

KEY WEST, February 23, 1830.

MR. WILLIAM FREAN:

Dear Sir: In answer to the inquiries which you made this day, as to the natural formation of Salt in the ponds on this Island, we state, that several years previous to the exchange of flags we were residents in this territory, frequently visited the Florida Reef and Rendezvous at Key West. We then visited the ponds at various times, and noticed their briny qualities. We were induced to experiment the ponds and try what effect raking would have. We succeeded in obtaining excellent Salt and in great abundance.

We have no hesitation in expressing as our opinion, that if Salt making was to be properly commenced and managed by men skilled in the business, that Salt equal in quality to Turk's Island could be obtained, and in quantity sufficient to supply the whole of the United States.

We are respectfully,

JOHN WHALTON.

JOSEPH XEMENES.

KEY WEST, February 22, 1830.

I certify that I have frequently visited what are termed the "Salt Ponds;" that I have observed where the water of the said ponds has receded, considerable quantities of Salt formed altogether by evaporation, and spontaneously. That I entertain no doubt of the practical utility of these ponds, by slight expense and little difficulty, being made extremely profitable by the manufacture of Salt. Every theoretical principle, as well as actual experiment, proves the complete practicability of the conversion of the water in the ponds, to Salt, by the simple process of evaporation.

GEORGE S. HAWKINS.

CLERK'S OFFICE, KEY WEST, February 21, 1830.
 WILLIAM FREAN, Esq.

Sir: In reply to your inquiry of me as to the practicability of making Salt from the ponds on this Island, I have only to state, that from the experiments heretofore made, together with the particles of Salt found on the margin of the ponds, produced by natural causation, that salt can be made in great quantities, and in my opinion, the ponds are admirably adapted to that purpose.

I am very respectfully, Sir, your obedient servant,
 JOEL YANCEY, Jr. *Clerk S.W. of Florida.*

Copy of a letter from Edward Chandler, United States' District Attorney, to William Frean, Esq dated Key West, February 22, 1830.

Dear Sir: In reply to the inquiry you made this morning as to the practicability of making Salt at Key West, I have briefly to premise, that from my never having been acquainted with the process of making Salt, I cannot undertake to speak positively. I have, however, been several times at the ponds on this Island, and from what I have observed of them I should conclude, that with a very little trouble an immense amount of this article might be made, and a handsome profit realized from it by any one who has the means of making a fair experiment. I have remarked that so much of the bottom of these ponds as I could see has invariably been covered with a coat or crust of salt. This is also the case on the margin of the ponds.

Extract of Colonel Brooke's Report to General Macomb, of 4th April, 1829.

"I shall now do myself the honor to answer to each head of your inquiries, as laid down in your letter. The soil is in some places a very rich vegetable mould, based on secondary lime stone; in other places sand.

"All the materials for erecting the quarters, fort or battery are on the Island in the greatest abundance, whether for tappa or stone work, with the exception of that part which must consist of wood. The position selected, I believe to be as healthy, if not more so than any other on the Island, and from what I saw and heard, the place was perfectly healthy at the time we were there, excepting some cases of the small pox. In regard to its health, I beg leave to refer you to the report of Assistant Surgeon, Edward Macomb, and also a

letter from Doctor Lacey, a resident physician. The ponds near the town, were formerly fresh stagnant water, which have been drained, and is believed to have relieved the inhabitants from many of the violent attacks of fever, which they were affected with. There are still several ponds of the same character, which should and can be easily drained; but there is nothing which could add more materially to the health of the place than the cutting out of the under brush, which is now so thick as to prevent the necessary circulation of air. Indeed, I believe it would increase the health and comfort more than any other improvement which has been attempted. The water used for drinking, unless cistern water, is of the worst kind, and much of the sickness which has heretofore prevailed may be attributed to that cause, as the poorer class of people, are compelled to resort to the springs and wells, particularly in dry seasons when cistern water is scarce. In the erection of barracks, one great object must be, that immediate attention to the construction of very extensive and good cisterns. Rain water is the only kind which can be used with impunity at Key West during the fall and summer months. The military should be allowed every thing which can be legally given them, in good quarters, hospital stores, provisions, clothing, bedding and musquitto bars—all of the best kind and quality. The great mortality which prevailed amongst the officers and seamen of the Navy, during the period of their occupancy of the Island is to be attributed to many causes. A want of comfort on their first establishment in not having good quarters, bad water, there being no cisterns at that time, stagnant ponds of fresh water, which have been since drained, the Island imperiously covered with wood, preventing the least circulation of air, the long cruizes of six weeks' duration in open boats, under a tropical sun, and immediately on their return placed on extremely laborious duty in cutting roads, and erecting quarters—added to this, a want of police, in not being able to prevent the men from an excessive use of ardent spirits, sold to them by the hucksters, and after becoming intoxicated, laying out during the night, and hiding themselves in the under brush, where it was impossible to find them, and when taken sick, the hospital entirely too small, either for the necessary room or proper ventilation, in so southern a climate. It is easy enough to suppose, that such causes which are here represented, would produce the most fatal diseases in any country. The advantages derived from the military occupancy of the Island are many and important. Key West being so detached from the United States, its sovereignty would be expressed by its

flag, supported either by a military or marine force; but by a military force in preference, inasmuch as a marine force would not be intended to be stationary, but removed, as other causes or objects might impel it, and could of course afford no protection during its absence. It has now no protection saving the occasional presence of two Revenue Cutters, both of which a large privateer could easily capture. The present population is not sufficiently large to defend it—neither have they arms of any kind to assist themselves with, and could be laid at any time under contribution by any lawless marauder.

The United States have frequently large sums of money in the hands of the collector, besides large sums in the hands of the marshal of the United States' Court belonging to individuals. These are often brought in by the wreckers, vessels with their cargoes, valued from 20 to \$100,000. There are many vessels belonging to the place, with a great deal of property owned by the inhabitants, all of which would be, and is at the mercy of any daring adventurer. In a Naval point of view, there is no port in the United States south of the Chesapeake, where such a draft of water can be taken in, admitting vessels of the largest class, and when in, one of the safest harbors in the world.

In the event of war, with any power owning Islands in the West Indies, and by the time that such a circumstance might take place, we as a nation would probably be strong enough on the ocean to operate on any of those Islands, Key West would afford the best and most desirable position from which the necessary expeditions could be fitted out. We should be able to act quickly, at all times taking advantage of fortuitous circumstances regarding wind and weather, cutting up and destroying all the commerce of our enemy in those seas, and protecting our own; besides affording during the equinoctial gales or bad weather, the very best roadstead, and should the Island prove to be healthy, a Navy Yard of the first class might be established, the necessary depth of water coming up to the very beach. Key West from its proximity to the Island of Cuba, will always be a check on the authorities there, and the establishment of a military post even at this time, will place them in a state of fear and alarm. During the war with Great Britain, the English used all the ports of Spain in this peninsula, but since the cession of the Floridas to us, she will be deprived of those harbors, and in the event of another war they would endeavor to take possession of Key West to prevent us from using a harbor, which would be of so much advantage to us, whilst it would suit her equally as well. It is a harbor ex-

ceedingly difficult to blockade, in consequence of its several channels, as is proved by the fact that Commodore Laborde with a very superior squadron was never able to confine to port that of Commodore Porter. The Island to us, regarding the commerce of the Gulf and Bay of Mexico, is nearly as valuable as if we possessed the Havana. It is the key on the northern side of the Gulf, which the Island of Cuba is to the south.—Nature has done so much for its harbor, that it can be made exceedingly strong by proper fortifications. The commerce of Key West, at this time, is not very extensive, as will be seen from the letter of the proprietors to me, which I beg leave to refer to, showing in a clear and lucid point of view, to what extension its commerce might be increased, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE SALT PONDS ARE PUT IN OPERATION. THE STATEMENTS MADE IN THIS LETTER, ARE PERFECTLY CORRECT FROM WHAT I SAW, AND THE INFORMATION DERIVED FROM OTHER SOURCES. THERE IS NO LIMIT TO THE QUANTITY OF SALT, WHICH MAY AND CAN BE MADE. The Island of Key West being only about three miles long, and one in breadth, is not susceptible of being made profitable in an agricultural point of view; but being beyond the region of frost, all the tropical plants would no doubt succeed admirably, the fruit of course would yield a handsome profit to the owners, shipped to the different ports of the United States, freed from the duties which are now paid on the foreign article. From what I heard, it is probable the experiment will be made. The number of vessels and seamen employed in fishing and wrecking, with the value of the exported fish, which can be extended to any amount, I beg leave to refer you to the letter of William Pinkney, Esq. Collector. It is difficult to ascertain the amount and value of wrecked property, but it must be of great value, ranging from year to year, as tempests may prevail. From what has been stated in this communication, together with the enclosed letters, I trust that the information required has been given as far as I was capable, and that the government will perceive that Key West is an extremely important situation, both in a military and Naval point of view. The only disadvantages which may be supposed, are its possible unhealthiness, there being a constant intercourse between the Havana and the other ports of the West Indies, from whence malignant fevers may be imported; the difficulty of reinforcing it, in time of war, and a scarcity of good water, should any dry seasons prevail. It will be well enough to mention, that the Mexican squadron, whilst under the command of Commodore Porter, and since, enjoyed perfect health, whilst

in the port of Key West, since the ponds have been drained, and their ability to procure good water.

Before concluding this report, it may be proper to observe, that there should be, at least two companies, stationed at Key West, that the battery should be furnished with 18 and 24 pounders, two large howitzers and one mortar. The houses should be constructed of two blocks 25 feet square with a passage of 20 feet between them (covered,) each room to have six windows and two doors, with porticoes 12 feet wide, extending all round them. It is absolutely necessary in this climate, that every building should be well shaded and ventilated.— There should also be two six pounders, to be used as light artillery, for the defence of every unprotected part of the Island.

This report would have been made and forwarded long since, but it has been delayed in consequence of our long passage, both to, and from Key West, with the absence of Col. Greene, who was in the Havana, and to which place we were obliged to go for the purpose of seeing him, it being only ninety miles across.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman who has spent a good deal of his time at Key West, dated New York, 27th August, 1830.

In reply to your inquiries in relation to the manufacture of Salt at Key West, I have to state the following facts: I have, during the last three years repeatedly visited that Island and its Salt ponds, the principal one covers a surface of from 300 to 350 acres, and produces Salt by spontaneous evaporation in large quantities. One of the proprietors caused a quantity to be raked, a part of which remained in store there in October last, and some of it is now in this city. The quality is good, similar to the Turk's Islands, but it would evidently be improved by the formation of the divisions or pans. I have resided nearly 25 years in the West Indies, and know of no spot among all those Islands better adapted to the making of Salt than Key West. The harbor is one of the finest in the world, and situation central, being equi-distant from Savannah and Charleston to the North, and Mobile and New Orleans to the West, and but twelve hours sail from Havana in the Island of Cuba.

CHESTER, December 29, 1829.

SIR—In consequence of your application to me for my opinion of Thompson's Island, or Key West, I have to state, in reply, that since the year 1823, I have from time to time, been making myself acquainted with the Florida coast and Keys—part of the time in command of the United States' squadron, and subsequently in command of the Mexican force in that quarter; and perhaps there is no man living better qualified than myself to give an opinion on the subject, as my information is derived from actual observation and practical experience.

The harbor of Key West is, in my opinion, the best harbor within the limits of the United States, or its Territories, to the south of the Chesapeake:

1st—For its easy access and egress at all times and with all winds.

2d—For the excellent anchorage and security it affords both in the inner and outer harbor, for ships of the largest class;—leading to the harbor of Key West are several excellent channels, some affording water for the largest class of ships, the others suited to the vessels drawing 10 and 11 feet water.

The advantages which Key West affords in a commercial point of view, are,

1st—Its vicinity to the Island of Cuba and port of Havana, having a ready market for all articles placed there in deposit, or left by the wreckers, of whom this is the rendezvous of those on the coast.

2d—It being a convenient touching place for all vessels bound to and from the Gulf of Mexico, Bay of Honduras, and the coasts of Louisiana and Florida.

As a Naval station, Key West has decidedly the advantage over all others I have ever known:

1st—In its susceptibility of fortification.

2d—The ease and number of its approaches with all winds.

3d—The difficulty of blockade, as I have proved while in command of the Mexican squadron, it requiring a blockading force equal to three or four times the force to be blockaded, to keep up an efficient blockade.

4th—The ease with which supplies may be thrown in, in despite of the presence of an enemy

5th—Abundance of wood and water.

In speaking of Key West as a naval station, I have reference only as to its being employed as a depot for stores, and a rendezvous for our ships of war; but even as a place for the

establishment of a Navy Yard, it has most decidedly the advantage over Pensacola, and every other place south of the Chesapeake.

1st—On account of the depth of water.

Pensacola and all the other places alluded to, only admitting sloops of war, and those not with safety—with the exception of the Tortugas, which, although it has depth of water sufficient, is devoid of all other advantages for the purpose of a Navy Yard.

2d—Its more central situation and facility of communication with, and deriving all the advantages by water of supplies from the northern and southern sections of our union, viz: provisions from Louisiana; spars and live oak from the Floridas and Georgia; cordage, canvass, iron, gun-powder, shot, &c. from the north. The distance from either being short, the time, risk and expense of furnishing them must necessarily be reduced in proportion.

3d—Its salubrity of climate being equal in every respect to that of New-Providence, or any of the Bahamas.

The malady with which the naval forces under my command for the suppression of piracy was afflicted, had its origin in the excessive severity of the duty performed, and the total absence of every description of comfort. The disease was contracted among the haunts of the pirates on the coast of Cuba, and not as is generally supposed, at Key West.

It has been since proved, that during the worst seasons, the inhabitants of Key West have enjoyed as great a share of health as any other in the same parallel, and much more than of Pensacola, who have been seriously afflicted with pestilence, and compelled to abandon the town, while those of Key West and the Mexican squadron there, have been entirely exempt from sickness.—It is found that the salubrity of Key West improves yearly by the filling up of the ponds, clearing the woods, and by adding to the comfort of those who reside there—it will not be surprizing if it should hereafter become a place of resort to the inhabitants of our southern section during the prevalence of the sickly seasons.

These facts and opinions are stated after an experience of nearly seven years.

The advantages of its location as a military and naval station has no equal except Gibraltar.

1st—It commands the outlet of all the trade from Jamaica, the Carribean Sea, the Bay of Honduras, and the Gulf of Mexico.

2d—It protects the outlet and inlet of all the trade of the Gulf of Mexico, the whole western country of Louisiana and Floridas.

3d—It holds in subjection the trade of Cuba.

4th—It is a check to the naval forces of whatever nation may possess Cuba. It is to Cuba what Gibraltar is to Ceuta.

It is to the Gulf of Mexico, &c. what Gibraltar is to the Mediterranean.

Among its advantages as a military position may be enumerated an abundance of free stone for building, which being a concrete of coral and shells, is easily converted into lime. The Island is low, not being more than fifteen or twenty feet above the level of the ocean. The channel into the inner harbor runs bold to its western part, which makes wharfs easy of construction. The soil is rich, being formed of a vegetable decomposition, mixed with sand and shells. It produces all the plants and fruits of the tropics, with the exception of Coffee, and yields abundantly.

ON THE EASTERN PART OF THE ISLAND IS A VERY EXTENSIVE NATURAL SALT POND, WHICH, FROM EVERY APPEARANCE, I SHOULD JUDGE, WITH A MODERATE CAPITAL AND ENTERPRIZE, NIGHT BE MADE TO VIE WITH ANY OF THOSE IN THE BRITISH BAHAMAS.

Stock of every description live and thrive well on the Island, without requiring any care whatever, as has been abundantly proved by those which I imported on account of the United States from Cuba and the Bahamas.

The thick growth of wood with which the Island is covered, and which affords timber suitable for the construction of small vessels, is filled with deer and other game, and the seas abound in the finest fish in the world.

In making this statement respecting Key West, I am actuated by no other feeling than the desire that my country should not, by the prejudices, partialities, interested views and errors of others, be induced to lose sight of the great advantages it presents—whether looked at in a military or a commercial point of view. The naval rendezvous has been removed from Key West to Pensacola, enormous amounts have been expended on the navy yard of the latter, and it is found unsuited to the purpose for which it was designed. An effort is now making to form a naval establishment on the insulated cluster of sand keys called the Dry Tortugas, which may easily be surrounded by a small enemy's force, exposed to his cannon without entering the harbor, which afford neither wood nor water, nor scarcely any kind of vegetation, and have the in-

superable objection of not affording a sufficient area of land on which to form a naval establishment of even a very limited extent.

Nature appears to have formed it for 'a place of deposit for the eggs of the Turtle and the sea-birds, and the art of man can make very little more of it.

Key West has been tried, and is proved to possess all the advantages which are desirable in a naval depot and rendezvous.—It is proved that the only objection, insalubritary of climate, has no foundation in fact. Where then is the necessity of making further disbursements or useless experiments, when one has already been made in Key West, and has proved satisfactory?

With great respect, your obedient servant,

DAVID PORTER.

In Senate of the United States, March 4, 1830.

Mr. Woodbury made the following Report:

The Committee on Commerce, to which was referred a resolution on "the expediency of extending the right of debenture to merchandise imported into Key West, from other than foreign ports, but entitled, at the time of importation, to debenture;" and to which committee was also referred a petition from sundry merchants in New York, on the same subject, ask leave to report:

That they find the facts bearing on the above references, to be as follows:

The act of Congress, passed May 7th, 1822, makes Key West a common port of entry, and Pensacola a port of entry, likewise, for vessels from beyond the Cape of Good Hope; but at the same time, it expressly takes from both of them the right of debenture on merchandise brought coastwise.

This last right has always before been attached to the numerous ports of entry, where vessels may enter from beyond the Cape of Good Hope, as may be seen by the 77th section of the act of Congress, of the 2d of March, A. D. 1799.

The question now presented, is, whether Key West is so situated, as to its trade, population and neighborhood, as to render it expedient to extend to it so desirable a privilege, as the right of debenture on goods not imported there from abroad?

From the most authentic sources, the committee are satisfied that, though the Island of Key West contains only about 1,900 acres, and has few capacities to produce much beyond tropical fruits and Salt; yet its position for a successful prosecution of the fisheries, for the saving of wrecked property, and for commerce with Cuba, Mexico, and parts of South America, is highly advantageous.

It has a fine harbor of 28 feet depth, and, from its command of a part of the Gulf of Mexico, and its nearness to Havana, being within about eighty miles, expectations are cherished by some, of its becoming soon an important military and naval station.

Its population in A. D. 1829, varied from 3 to 500; and the past and present extent, and character of its trade, seem to be these:

In the year ending September, A. D. 1828, the tonnage entering there, was 7,880 American, and 839 Foreign; and that departing, 6,772 American, and 989 Foreign. The tonnage of the Island itself in December, 1827, was 1,223 registered, and 59 enrolled.

During the last year about 780 tons were employed in the fisheries, and something over \$100,000 worth of fish were exported to Havana; and twelve or thirteen vessels, manned by about 120 men, were engaged in wrecking.

The duties collected at Key West, have been in

A. D. 1824,	-	-	-	\$14,162
1825,	-	-	-	67,337
1826,	-	-	-	33,993

And in 3 quarters of 1827 and of 1829, over \$37,000 each.

The imports into Key West, in A. D. 1828, were \$164,446, and in 3 quarters of 1829, \$140,585.

The exports in A. D. 1828, were \$118,520, and the 3 quarters of 1829, \$48,474.

Compared with all other ports in Florida, her imports and trade are more than $\frac{3}{2}$ rds of the whole, and her commerce exceeds that of 4 or 5 other places in the United States, to which the right of debenture now asked has been heretofore granted.

Concerning the healthiness of the Island, opinions are somewhat contradictory, and its present exposed situation, without a permanent military or naval force for protection, seems to us to occasion some insecurity to its property and business.

Doubts are also entertained by some of the committee, whether ample bonds could always be given there, not to re-

land the merchandise entitled to debenture, and whether frauds on the revenue, by procuring incredible testimony as to the landing of the merchandise abroad, would not there be more easily practiced than elsewhere.

But a majority of the committee, influenced by the facts before adduced, and by the favorable opinions of the Treasury Department, annexed (marked A.) deem it just and expedient to allow the right requested, and report a bill for the consideration of the Senate, to carry that right into effect.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, 31st December, 1829.

SIR: I have the honor to state, in reply to your inquiry as to the propriety of extending the usual privilege of drawback to goods transported coastwise to Key West, that the commerce of that island has increased very considerably since the establishment of the custom house. It is understood to be a safe harbor, and the most convenient depot for wrecked property in that region, a vast amount of which is annually exposed to loss.

The imports for 1828, were \$164,446—exports, \$118,520.

“ 1829, 140,585, “ 48,754.

The duties secured during the three quarters of 1829, exceed \$37,000.

The custom house establishment is well organized, and may be relied upon for the proper execution of the laws; nor is there reason to doubt the fidelity of the court. I am not therefore aware of any objections to allowing the privilege of drawback to goods transported coastwise to Key West. The measure would, no doubt, benefit the commerce of the Island, by enabling the merchants located there to make up assorted cargoes for the West India and Spanish American trade, with greater despatch and less capital.

Permit me to remark, in connexion with this subject, that, as the District of St. Augustine now extends on the Florida coast to Cape Sable, including the Islands nearest, and opposite thereto, a considerable portion of it is much nearer the port of Key West than that of St. Augustine; and that a Revenue Cutter will necessarily be stationed at the former place, but has not been deemed necessary at the latter. The commercial business of that part of the coast, and of the adjacent islands which are nearest Key West, can consequently be more conveniently superintended, and the revenue more effectually guarded by officers of the customs at Key West than at St. Augustine. I would

therefore, respectfully suggest the propriety of extending the Key West District from Cape Sable to Indian river, including the adjacent islands.

I have the honor to be,
Very respectfully,
Your ob't serv't,

S. D. INGHAM,
Secretary of the Treasury.

Hon. L. WOODBURY,
Ch. Com. on Commerce, Senate United States.

CITY HOTEL, NEW YORK, September 17, 1829.

Sir: In our late conversation respecting the Island of Key West, I promised you to submit to paper the views that I entertained of its probable salubrity, &c. You are aware that I was ordered by the War Department to make a general reconnoissance of the Island, as the impression abroad and at home were very unfavorable to its reputation for health. I was satisfied by personal observation and diligent inquiry, that the most erroneous notions had been circulated on this topic.

The chances for general health and longevity, are as great at Key West as any other spot on the Gulf of Mexico.

This conclusion has been founded on the most careful examination of the place, and as I have resided six years at various places on the Gulf of Mexico, I should be qualified to form some probable estimate.

It is unnecessary to enter into detailed remarks in support of this assertion, but if you wish further information, I will refer you to the elaborate report on the Island of Key West made by General Brooke of the United States' Army and myself.

This document is on file in the War Office at Washington, and will satisfy the most sceptical.

I have the honor to remain,
Your most obedient humble servant,

EDWD. MACOMB,

M. D. of the United States' Army.

REMARKS.

The Salt Pond at Key West contains upwards of three hundred acres, which it is believed is susceptible, by proper management, of producing by solar evaporation, more than 2,000,000 bushels of Salt per annum; and judging from the results of the various experiments which have been made by some of the inhabitants of the Island, as well as from the opinions of other highly respectable individuals who have examined the pond with great care and attention, it cannot be doubted that an investment of capital in the manufacture of Salt at Key West, would yield a profit that could not be realized in any other business: inasmuch as the protecting duty on the article will still stand at 10 cents per 56 lbs. or about $13\frac{1}{2}$ cents the measured bushel, after the 31st December, 1831, which of itself would afford the manufacturer a large profit.*

Fifteen thousand dollars ~~has~~ been appropriated at the last session of Congress, for the purpose of *building barracks, draining the ponds, and locating a military force on the Island*, which will be carried into effect in October or November next, and which it is supposed will have a tendency to render the place as healthy as any other situated in the same parallel of latitude.

The title to the property was confirmed by an act of Congress, approved the 23d of May, 1828, and is now warranted free from all incumbrances.

J. W. SIMONTON.

WASHINGTON CITY, Sept. 4, 1830.

* The manufacturers of Salt in the Bahama Islands have not been able to obtain more than from 7 to 10 cents per bushel for many years past, and yet they made a good profit by their operations.